

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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GRETCHEN.

By the Author of "Dame Durden," "My Lord Conceit,"
"Darby and Joan," "Corinna," etc.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER IV. CONTRASTS.

MEANWHILE Adrian Lyle had gone back to his duties, looking like the mere ghost of his former self. He was not really well enough to undertake service, but he insisted on doing so, and the Rector did not see fit to combat a resolution attended with convenience to himself.

It was a surprise to Adrian Lyle, as he took his usual place, to see the Abbey pew tenanted by Alexis Kenyon and her father. It surprised him, too, to notice the shock that his presence seemed to give them. Evidently he had been expected; but he made no allowance for his changed and haggard looks.

To Alexis Kenyon that sad, worn face, so aged and haggard, was more than a surprise; it was a painful and startling shock. The Rector's droning complaints of his Curate's illness and its many inconveniences had in no way prepared her for so great a change, and for once her heart grew compassionate and almost gentle, as she pictured what he must have endured ere his physical strength could be so reduced.

Much to her father's surprise, she had remained at the Abbey all this time, evincing not the slightest inclination either for travel or society, which had hitherto been second nature. Sir Roy was inclined to put it down to Neale's absence and the danger he was incurring, although Alexis rarely alluded to him, and then only in the coldest and most indifferent manner.

Perhaps nothing that Adrian Lyle could have done would have held her fancy

arrested and almost chagrined as this absence of his. Often she had wondered if it was intentional, or if some hidden motive lurked behind; but the first time her eyes rested on his altered face convinced her that his illness had been infinitely more serious than she had even imagined. When she saw him in his old place, when she heard the deep thrilling tones of that musical voice, her heart seemed to lose all its frozen calm, and a feeling of content and peace stole over her for almost the first time in her life.

She told herself it was only pity that moved her to so swift and sudden an emotion; only pity that made her linger in the church porch after service, in order to speak to him once more. Perhaps, too, it was only pity that made her ask him to the Abbey to luncheon, an invitation, however, which he firmly but gently refused.

"I am not fit for company yet," he said. "I shall just go home and lie down till the evening service. I had no idea I should feel so knocked up."

"You must have been very ill," she said. "It quite shocked me to see how changed you were. I suppose you had some stupid country doctor to attend you and no one to nurse you. I wish you had been sent here."

He coloured faintly.

"I did very well," he said. "And I was carefully looked after, I assure you. The doctor was both kind and skilful. I shall soon be all right again."

Then he turned to Sir Roy. "I hope," he said, "you have good news of your nephew."

"None at all—as yet," announced the Baronet. "He always was a bad correspondent. Things look very serious out there though, and I am getting anxious. I see his regiment is ordered to the front."

"Yes," said Adrian Lyle, gravely. "I saw that, too. I wonder he does not write."

"You would not wonder, if you knew him as well as we do," said Sir Roy, with a glance at his daughter.

She made a movement of impatience. "If you won't be persuaded, Mr. Lyle," she said, "I must bid you good-bye. I hope you will come to the Abbey as soon as you feel stronger."

She said it with a coldness she was far from feeling, for she felt hurt at his refusal. The memory of it haunted her all that afternoon, while she sat under the trees on the lawn with a book which she never read, and felt that her expectation of his presence had been almost a certainty, and had enlivened the long service and the weary sermon.

She did not go to church again, and for the next few days kept away from the village entirely. She told herself she could afford to wait, he would be sure to come to her as all the others had done; but the week went by and Sunday came again, and she had not once seen him.

When she rose that morning, she thought that nothing would induce her to go to the service, but, despite resolution, the carriage was ordered to come round for her. Her father did not accompany her, but as he stood at the hall door to see her off, he called out "bring Mr. Lyle back, if you can. I want to have a talk to him."

This time, Adrian Lyle did not refuse the invitation, which, however, she extended to the Rector also, for reasons best known to herself, and which he accepted with the alacrity of one who likes good cheer, and knows he will get it.

The drive was a somewhat silent one. Adrian Lyle looked certainly better, though he was still far from strong, and infinitely graver and more absorbed than he had been before that sudden and unexplained absence. Yet, despite his silence and gravity, Alexis felt strangely content. It was pleasant to look up and see that calm grave face opposite; pleasant to hear his voice addressing her, to know that for the next two or three hours she could claim his attention exclusively. She let the Rector have his say during the drive, though he bored her dreadfully—there was all the afternoon to look forward to, and she smiled as she thought it would be very possible to make good use of it.

The day was chill and gloomy, the sky grey. Already the leaves were falling

rapidly, and the trees in the avenue had lost much of their summer glory; but within the Abbey itself all was warmth, luxury, beauty.

A wood fire blazed in the great hall and shed its light over the carved oak furniture, the skins and rugs, the pictures and statues, the palms and flowers, the hundred-and-one articles of beauty and art, with which it was embellished.

And when luncheon was over and Sir Roy had dragged the Rector off to the library, and Adrian Lyle found himself established in the most luxurious of chairs before the blazing fire, with the graceful and charming figure of Alexis Kenyon in close proximity, he would have been very ungrateful if he had not acknowledged that the hour and the scene were pleasant.

She was determined that they should be so; and for that end and purpose made herself as gentle and womanly as hitherto she had been cold and repellent. All the infinite charm of mind and manner which she possessed she used now, as means to an end which she had vowed to accomplish. She told herself that merely intellectual curiosity moved her in her endeavour to read Adrian Lyle's nature, as she had read scores of others; but if that were so, the curiosity was subservient to an interest which defied analysis; which invested his looks, tones, gestures, with a meaning no other man's had ever possessed.

They had discussed many things and disagreed on many points before Adrian Lyle found himself calm enough to put to her a question which had troubled him for long. And even then—despite preparation and control—there was a change in his voice which her quick ear at once noticed.

"Can you tell me," he said, "what has become of that Italian servant of your cousin's who was with him when I first made his acquaintance? He has not accompanied him to the war, I suppose?"

"No, of course not," she answered. "But I have no idea where he is. Perhaps my father knows. He had a very high opinion of the man. I cannot say I agreed with it. I always disliked him. I had a feeling he was not honest. Oh, I don't mean to say that he would rob or cheat you; but he was not straightforward in his dealings."

"I thought so also," said Adrian Lyle.

He was looking gravely and thoughtfully into the fire, and her keen eyes noted every change in his face, and wondered

why the mention of this name should be one of interest or disturbance.

"I have often wished to know," she said presently, "where and how you met Neale. His descriptions are always vague. I could never learn anything from him."

"There is not much to learn," said Adrian Lyle. "It was at Venice. We did the usual sights there; wondered at the numbers of churches, still more at the numbers of pictured saints; were rowed about in gondolas; explored the Doge's Palace; were pestered by guides and beggars; admired St. Mark's and did not feed the pigeons; walked up to the top of the Campanile; then went on to Rome, and there parted. You see there was nothing in the least interesting or romantic about our acquaintance."

"Was his sight quite strong—then?" she asked curiously.

"He used to wear glasses sometimes," said Adrian Lyle. Then he looked straight at her. "Why do you wish to know about our meeting?" he asked in turn.

She looked somewhat disturbed by the direct question.

"I did not suspect a mystery," she said with a little laugh, "nor a romance, knowing Neale as I do." But even as she said it she noticed that a sudden flush leaped into Adrian Lyle's pale face, and in her heart she whispered: "There was something—I am sure of it."

"Your cousin," said Adrian Lyle coldly, "is not romantic; at least, so I should say."

"Most men are not romantic, though all, they say, have their romance," she answered, looking keenly and critically now at the flushed and troubled face, whose calm a chance word had disturbed.

He smiled a little bitterly.

"Perhaps," he said; "you ought to know a great deal more on that subject than I do, Miss Kenyon."

"And yet," she said, "clergymen hear strange stories and are the recipients of strange confidences sometimes."

"The stories of breaking hearts and sorrowful lives," he said gravely; "not things to interest you."

"How can you tell?" she asked suddenly, and her eyes flashed with defiant light. "Why should you think me so cold, and hard, and indifferent?"

"Pardon me," he said somewhat startled, "I never said I thought you—that; but you appeared desirous of obtaining the character."

"I think," she said, and her voice grew strangely soft, "I am a mass of contradictions, and no one has ever taken the trouble to make anything out of them. It is my own fault, I know. I have always been proud that I could stand alone; that I was perfectly independent of sympathy, or love, or even friendship."

"You are putting that independence," he said, "in the past. I imagined you were still capable of it, and still proud of the fact."

"You are fond of plain speaking," she said. "Supposing I told you I had begun to feel that necessity for sympathy and affection which underlies all feminine natures, would you believe me?"

"I should not be so rude as to doubt your word, Miss Kenyon, though I might the depth or extent of a new fancy."

"Of course you would only credit me with a 'fancy,'" she said bitterly. "That is your large-hearted Christian charity, Mr. Lyle, which professes to believe the best, and thinks the worst."

"No—you wrong me," he said quickly. "I have not much faith in words which give but new names to new caprices. The soul's zeal manifests itself in the life's work. A few empty phrases cannot alter the selfish indifference of years."

"If you were any other man," she cried with sudden, hot anger, "I would ask you how you dared to speak to me like that? But," and she laughed slightly, "your profession has its privileges, and fault-finding is one. On the whole I am not sure that it is not an agreeable variety to unmingled adulation. I may at least conclude it is sincere, and now—to return to our first subject—have you any special reason for wishing to know where Bari is? If so, I can procure his address from my father."

"Thank you," he said, "I should be glad of it. I have a special reason."

She wondered what it could be, but she did not like to ask, and he did not pursue the subject. He looked pale and fatigued as he leant back in his chair, and she watched him furtively from behind the hand-screen of feathers which she held between herself and the fire.

For some time they were silent. Then the servants brought in lamps and tea, and the dusky old hall looked its best in that mingling of rose-light and shadow.

Adrian Lyle looked round with a little sigh.

"This sort of thing," he said, as he

took a cup of tea from her hand, "spoils one for work-a-day life, Miss K-nyon. I am not used to luxury, and I think it is not good for me."

"It would be very good for you at present," she said gravely. "You look wretchedly ill still, and as if you needed care. Have you no mother or sisters to come and look after you?"

"No," he said, "I am quite alone in the world. My parents died before I was six. I was brought up by a bachelor uncle, who educated me and sent me to college. But he died, too, very soon after I had taken Orders. My story is very commonplace, you see, and my life seems destined to be a lonely one."

"I wonder," she said, looking at him thoughtfully, "why you became a clergyman?"

"Do you think I am not suited to the vocation?" he asked, smiling. "I think no other would have suited me so well, though in the first instance I only agreed to it in deference to my uncle's wishes."

"And afterwards?"

"Oh, because of my own. I was glad when duty and inclination ceased to fight. They had rather a hard tussle once."

"I should fancy that you have very strong ideas of duty," she said. "It must be rather troublesome, that perpetual struggle, that constant sacrifice of oneself and one's own desires. And after all it ends in the same way—annihilation and forgetfulness."

"We differ on that point, you know," he said gravely. "If the end were only annihilation, then probably our best plan would be to get all possible good and pleasure out of life at any cost."

"If there is any to be got," she interrupted. "The world seems to me a narrow place with but few resources."

"And you are content to believe in no other; no wider sphere of thought and feeling; a nobler and more perfect existence for the unfettered soul, that here knows no lasting content?"

"If you could convince me," she said, "that individual life is anything but a law of nature, more often regrettable than advantageous; that that life is ruled by aught but implacable laws, which are not to be altered or turned aside; then you might also convince me that something was to be attained by your belief in an after existence, and by constant deeds of virtue and self-sacrifice in this present one. I confess," and she looked gravely at

his pained face, "I should like to be convinced, but no one has yet succeeded in the task."

GOETHE AND CARLYLE.

IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

WHAT a wealth of literature is suggested by these two names! what mines of thought! what depths of philosophy! They are the names of two men whose writings have, probably, had more influence upon the thought of the living generation than those of any other two men of their age.

As men, of course, neither of them was perfect. About Goethe there was almost a magnificent littleness—a transcendentalisation of frivolity—in his legional love affairs. He was self-indulgent and pleasure-loving, in spite of his grandeur of philosophy and height of poetry. Carlyle, again, was a discontented, atrabilious mortal, whose cry was ever, "Oh, man, man!" and whose never-ending queries were "Why?" and "Whither?" Neither of these men had reason to be thankful to his biographer, at any rate; and perhaps the world would have been better if it had known less of the personality of two of its greatest literary heroes.

But let their individual lives rest, for their works follow them. We do not propose here to enter upon either biographical sketch or critical examination, but merely to trace for a little the relations of the two men as these are exhibited in their correspondence, a volume of which, full of deepest interest, has lately been published.*

Those who are familiar with the writings of Carlyle must be also familiar with the intensity of his admiration for the genius of the great German. It influenced his own to a remarkable degree, coloured his opinions, directed his views, and controlled his own literary actions; but it was, probably, Carlyle himself who first directed the attention of literary England in a special manner to much of the work of Goethe, and it was he certainly who gave a marked impetus to the study of German Literature in this country.

Long ago, in the pages of the "Foreign Review," Carlyle discovered in Goethe "what Philosophy can call a Man"—one

* "Correspondence between Goethe and Carlyle." Edited by Charles Eliot Norton. London: Macmillan and Co.

"neither noble nor plebeian, neither liberal nor servile, nor infidel nor devoted, but the best excellence of all these joined in pure union, a clear and universal Man." All good men, he goes on to say, may be called poets in act or in word, and all good poets are so in both; but Goethe was one of such deep endowment and gifted vision, of such experience and sympathy in the ways of all men, that he is gratified to stand forth, not merely as a literary monument, but as "the Teacher and Exemplar of his age."

These and other emphatic laudations of his master were written some time after Carlyle had entered into correspondence with him; but the beginning of the correspondence was the result of the young Scotchman's profound and almost slavish admiration. This was in 1824, when Carlyle was only twenty-nine years old, and when he had just published his translation of "Wilhelm Meister." Thus began the famous correspondence:

"London, 24th June, 1824.

"Permit me, Sir, in soliciting your acceptance of this Translation, to return you my sincere thanks for the profit which, in common with many millions, I have derived from the Original. That you will honour this imperfect copy of your work with a perusal, I do not hope: but the thought that some portion of my existence has been connected with that of the Man whose intellect and mind I most admire, is pleasing to my imagination; nor will I neglect the present opportunity of communing with you even in this slight and transitory manner. Four years ago, when I read your 'Faust' among the mountains of my native Scotland, I could not but fancy I might one day see you, and pour out before you, as before a Father, the woes and wanderings of a heart whose mysteries you seemed so thoroughly to comprehend, and could so beautifully represent. The hope of meeting you is still among my dreams. Many saints have been expunged from my literary calendar since I first knew you; but your name still stands there in characters more bright than ever. That your life may be long, long spared, for the solace and instruction of this and future generations, is the earnest prayer of, Sir, your most devoted servant,

"THOMAS CARLYLE."

This is what one may call a pretty letter, and one so unlike what we have been accustomed to think of "Thomas of Chelsea,"

that it is almost a literary curiosity. To see Carlyle going down on his knees to any man is a marvel; but we see it again and again throughout these letters, the prevailing note of which is almost abject prostration before his idol. But we must now give the receipt of what was the proudest and greatest delight of the struggling Scotchman's life at that time—the first letter from the great Goethe. It is dated Weimar, the thirtieth of October, 1824, and, of course, was in German:

"If I did not, my dear Sir, promptly inform you of the safe arrival of your welcome present, the reason was that I had not the intention of writing a mere acknowledgement, but of adding thereto some deliberate words concerning your work which does me such honour. My advanced years, continually burdened with many indispensable duties, have, however, prevented me from leisurely comparing your translation with the original; which might, perhaps, prove a harder task for me than for some third person thoroughly at home in German and English Literature. But now, since I have an opportunity of sending the present letter safely to London, by favour of the Lords Bentinck, and at the same time of bringing about an acquaintance agreeable to both parties, I do not delay to express my sincere thanks for your hearty sympathy in my literary work, as well as in the incidents of my life, and to beg earnestly for a continuance of it in the future. Perhaps I shall hereafter come to know much of you. Meanwhile I send, together with this, a set of poems, which you can hardly have seen, but which I venture to hope may prove of some interest to you.

"With the sincerest good wishes,

"Most truly yours,

"J. W. v. GOETHE."

It seems odd, nowadays, to think of anyone having to wait the opportunity of a chance traveller for the transmission of a letter from Germany to England; but then we are dealing with sixty-three years ago, before a "Postal Union" was even dreamed of. The receipt of this "Message from Fairyland," was at once rapturously communicated by Carlyle to Miss Welsh, his future wife, in a perfect ecstasy of delight over the "kind nothings, in a simple, patriarchal style, extremely to my taste." But it was not until more than two years had elapsed that he again ventured to address the mighty one, thanking him for the letter and present. In April, 1827, he writes:

"To me they are memorials of one

whom I never saw, yet whose voice came to me from afar, with counsel and help in my utmost need. For, if I have been delivered from darkness into any measure of light; if I know aught of myself, and my duties, and destination; it is to the study of your writings more than to any other circumstance, that I owe this: it is you more than any other man that I should always thank and reverence with the feeling of a Disciple to his Master, nay, of a son to his spiritual Father. This is no idle compliment, but a heartfelt truth; and humble as it is, I feel that the knowledge of such truths must be more pleasing to you than all other glory."

Then he goes on to speak of his "Life of Schiller," and "German Romance," copies of which he sends to Goethe, and of the success of some of Goethe's later publications, which leads up to this:

"All this warrants me to believe that your name and doctrines will, ere long, be English as well as German; and certainly there are few things which I think I have more satisfaction in contemplating than the fact that to this result my own efforts have contributed; that I have assisted in conquering for you a new province of mental empire; and for my countrymen a new treasure of wisdom which I myself have found so precious. One day it may be, if there is any gift in me, I shall send you some work of my own; and, along with it, you will deserve far deeper thanks than those of Hilaria to her friendly artist."

The last allusion is to two characters in Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister." After this the letter goes on to an interesting personal matter:

"About six months ago I was married; my young wife, who sympathises with me in most things, agrees also in my admiration of you, and would have me, in her name, beg of you to accept this purse, the work, as I can testify, of dainty fingers and true love; that so something, which she had handled and which had been hers, might be in your hands and be yours. In this little point I have engaged that you will gratify her. She knows you in your own language, and her first criticism was the following, expressed with some surprise: 'This Goethe is a greater genius than Schiller, though he does not make me cry!'—a better judgement than many which have been pronounced with more formality."

In due time—that is, in about a month or so—comes a hasty note from Goethe,

acknowledging the presents, and sending "most sincere thanks to the dear husband and wife," and intimating that a packet was being despatched to them in return. This letter was addressed to "Sir" Thomas Carlyle. It is followed, two months later, by a more lengthy epistle from Goethe, from which we extract the following:

"Let me, first of all, my dear Sir, commend most highly your biography of Schiller. It is remarkable for the close study it shows of the incidents of his life, whilst it also manifests a sympathetic study of his works. The accurate insight into the character and distinguished merit of this man, which you have thus acquired, is really admirable, and so clear and just as was hardly to have been expected from a foreigner. In this an old saying is verified: 'Love helps to perfect knowledge.' For precisely because the Scotchman regards the German with kindness, and honours and loves him, does he recognise most surely his admirable qualities; and thus he rises to a clearness of view, to which even the great man's compatriots could not in earlier days attain. For their contemporaries very easily fall into error concerning eminent men: personal peculiarities disturb them; the changeful current of life displaces their points of view, and hinders their knowledge and recognition of such men. Schiller, however, was of so exceptional a nature, that his biographer had but to keep before his eyes the ideal of a pre-eminent man, and by maintaining it to the end, through individual fortunes and actions, see his task fulfilled. The notices of the lives of Musäus, Hoffman, and Richter, prefixed to the 'German Romance' are also in their kind to be commended. They are compiled with care, set forth concisely, and give sufficient information concerning the individual character of each author, and of its effect upon his writings."

This criticism must have been as honey in the mouth to Carlyle, and it cemented the limited Mutual Laudation Society which the two now established. But this same letter of Goethe's is remarkable further for what it goes on to say about German Literature:

"Whoever understands and studies German, finds himself in the market where all nations offer their wares; he plays the interpreter, while he enriches himself. And thus every translator is to be regarded as a middle-man in this universal spiritual commerce, and as mak-

ing it his business to promote this exchange; for say what we may of the insufficiency of translation, yet the work is and will always be one of the weightiest and worthiest affairs in the general concerns of the world. The Koran says: 'God has given to each people a prophet in its own tongue!' Thus each translator is a prophet to his people. Luther's translation of the Bible has produced the greatest results, though criticism gives it qualified praise, and picks faults in it, even to the present day. What, indeed, is the whole enormous business of the Bible Society, but to make known the Gospel to all people in their own tongue?"

Then a fatherly word of advice is addressed to Carlyle to ponder over the meaning of what has been said, and warm thanks are tendered for the pains he has "expended on my works."

Shortly after this Carlyle writes in high delight to his mother:

"News came directly after breakfast that the packet from Goethe had arrived in Leith! Without delay I proceeded thither; found a little box carefully overlapped in wax-cloth, and directed to me. After infinite wranglings, and perplexed misdirected higgings, I succeeded in rescuing the precious packet from the fangs of the Custom-house sharks, and in the afternoon it was safely deposited in our own little parlour. The daintiest boxie you ever saw! so carefully packed, so neatly and tastefully contrived in everything. There was a copy of Goethe's poems in five beautiful little volumes 'for the valued marriage-pair Carlyle'; two other little books for myself; then two medals, one of Goethe himself, and another of his father and mother; and, lastly, the prettiest wrought-iron necklace with a little figure of the poet's face set in gold, 'for my dear spouse,' and a most dashing pocket-book for me. In the box containing the necklace, and in each pocket of the pocket-book were cards, each with a verse of poetry on it in the old master's own hand: all these I will translate to you by-and-by, as well as the long letter which lay at the bottom of all, one of the kindest and gravest epistles I ever read."

The "infinite wranglings and perplexed misdirected higgings" is deliciously characteristic of wrathful Thomas, who, however, duly attunes his mind and adjusts his pen for the following reply:

"If the best return for such gifts is

the delight they are enjoyed with, I may say that you are not unrepaid; for no royal present could have gratified us more. These books, with their Inscriptions, the Autographs and tasteful Ornaments, will be precious in other generation than ours. Of the Necklace in particular, I am bound to mention that it is repositied among the most precious jewels, and set apart 'for great occasions,' as an *ernste Zierde*, fit only to be worn before Poets and intellectual men. Accept our heartiest thanks for such friendly memorials of a relation which, faint as it is, we must always regard as the most estimable of our life. This little drawing-room may now be said to be full of you. My translations from your Works already stood, in fair binding, in the Bookcase, and portraits of you lay in portfolios. During our late absence in the country some good genius, to prepare a happy surprise for us, had hung up, in the best framing and light, a larger picture of you, which we understand to be the best resemblance; and now your Medals lie on the mantelpiece; your Books, in their silk-paper covers, have displaced even Tasso's 'Gerusalemme'; and from more secret recesses your handwriting can be exhibited to favoured friends. It is thus that good men may raise for themselves a little sanctuary in houses and hearts that lie far away. The tolerance, the kindness with which you treat my labours in German Literature must not mislead me into vanity, but encourage me to new efforts in appropriating what is Beautiful and True, wheresoever and howsoever it is to be found. If 'love' does indeed 'help to perfect knowledge,' I may hope in time coming to gain better insight both into Schiller and his Friend; for the love of such men lies deep in the heart and wedded to all that is worthy there."

Then, after a few remarks about Helena and Faust, he goes on:

"You are kind enough to inquire about my bygone life. With what readiness could I speak to you of it! how often have I longed to pour out the whole history before you! As it is, your Works have been a mirror to me unasked and un hoped for; your wisdom has counselled me; and so peace and health of Soul have visited me from afar. For I was once an Unbeliever, not in Religion only, but in all the Mercy and Beauty of which it is the Symbol; storm-tossed in my own imaginations, a man divided from men; exasperated, wretched, driven almost to despair;

so that Faust's wild curse seemed the only fit greeting for human life; and his passionate 'Fluch vor allen der Geduld!' was spoken from my very inmost heart. But now, thank Heaven, all this is altered; without change of external circumstances, solely by the new light which rose upon me, I attained to new thoughts, and a composure which I should once have considered as impossible. And now, under happier omens, though the bodily health which I lost in these struggles has never been and may never be restored to me, I look forward with cheerfulness to a life spent in Literature, with such fortune and such strength as may be granted me; hoping little and fearing little from the world; having learned that what I once called happiness is not only not to be attained on Earth, but not even to be desired. No wonder I should love the wise and worthy men by whose instructions so blessed a result has been brought about. For these men, too, there can be no reward like that consciousness that, in distant countries and times, the hearts of their fellow-men will yearn towards them with gratitude and veneration, and those that are wandering in darkness turn towards them as to loadstars guiding into a secure home. I shall still hope to hear from you, and again to write to you, and always acknowledge you as my Teacher and Benefactor. May all good be long continued to you for your own sake and that of Mankind."

Then a postscript is appended in Mrs. Carlyle's hand:

"My heartfelt thanks to the Poet for his graceful gift, which I prize more than a necklace of diamonds, and kiss with truest regard,

"J. W. CARLYLE."

We have given this interesting letter almost in full, because it is so eminently characteristic of Carlyle, and shows so much of his deep, inner feelings.

Some five months elapsed before Goethe responded; but in January, 1828, he wrote announcing the despatch of another package to the Carlyles, containing several volumes of the new edition of his works, six more medals—one of which is to be presented to Sir Walter Scott, "with my best regards," and the others to be distributed among "my well-wishers"—and some more little presents. Appended to the latter are cards bearing verses by Goethe, of which the following are rather lame translations:

ON A BREASTPIN.

When thy friend, in guise of Moor,
Greets thee now from background bright,
I envy him the happy hour
That brings him gladness in thy sight.

TO THE LOYAL AND LOVING PAIR, AT EDINBURGH. (For the New Year, 1828.)

When Phœbus' steeds too quickly take
To dark and cloud their flight,
The lamp of love will scarcely make
Full short the longest night.
And when again towards the light
The Hours shall swiftly throng,
So will a face, full kind and bright,
The longest day prolong.

In the box there was a continuation of the letter, containing literary remarks and some account of the state of society in Weimar at the time. As to this last, Thackeray, who was there, wrote to G. H. Lewes, in 1855:

"Five-and-twenty years ago, at least a score of young English lads used to live at Weimar for study, or sport, or society; all of which were to be had in the friendly little Saxon capital. The Grand Duke and Duchess received us with the kindest hospitality. The Court was splendid, but yet most pleasant and homely. We were invited in our turns to dinners, balls, and assemblies there. Such young men as had a right appeared in uniforms, diplomatic and military. Some, I remember, invented gorgeous clothing, the kind old Hof-Marschall of those days, M. de Spiegel (who had two of the most lovely daughters eyes ever looked on), being in no wise difficult as to the admission of these young Englishers. On the winter nights we used to charter sedan-chairs, in which we were carried through the snow to those pleasant Court entertainments. I, for my part, had the good luck to purchase Schiller's sword, which formed a part of my Court costume, and still hangs in my study, and puts me in mind of days of youth, the most kindly and delightful. We knew the whole society of the little city, and but that the young ladies, one and all, spoke admirable English, we surely might have learned the very best German. The society met constantly. The ladies of the Court had their evenings. The theatre was open twice or thrice in the week, where we assembled, a large family party. . . . In 1831, though he had retired from the world, Goethe would, nevertheless, kindly receive strangers. His daughter-in-law's tea-table was always spread for us. We passed hours after hours there, and night after night, with the

pleasantest talk and music. We read over endless novels and poems in French, English, and German. My delight in those days was to make caricatures for children. I was touched to find that they were remembered, and some even kept until the present time; and very proud to be told, as a lad, that the great Goethe had looked at some of them. He remained in his private apartments, where only a very few privileged persons were admitted; but he liked to know all that was happening, and interested himself about all strangers.

. . . . Of course I remember very well the perturbation of spirit with which, as a lad of nineteen, I received the long-expected intimation that the Herr Geheimrath would see me on such a morning. This notable audience took place in a little ante-chamber of his private apartments, covered all round with antique casts and bas-reliefs. He was habited in a long grey or drab redingote, with a white neckcloth, and a red ribbon in his button-hole. He kept his hands behind his back, just as in Rauch's statuette. His complexion was very bright, clear, and rosy. His eyes extraordinarily dark, piercing, and brilliant: I felt quite afraid before them, and recollect comparing them to the eyes of the hero of a certain romance called 'Melmoth, the Wanderer,' which used to alarm us boys thirty years ago; eyes of an individual who had made a bargain with a certain Person, and at an extreme old age retained these eyes in all their awful splendour. I fancied Goethe must have been still more handsome as an old man than even in the days of his youth. His voice was very rich and sweet. He asked me questions about myself, which I answered as best I could. I recollect I was at first astonished, and then somewhat relieved, when I found he spoke French with not a good accent."

This view of Weimar and Goethe is necessary to introduce here, because Carlyle, although always intending, never saw either; at any rate he was never in Weimar while Goethe lived.

THE KING'S EVIL.

ALTHOUGH it has been written that the action of the English regicides struck a "damp-like death through the heart of flunkeyism in this world," Royalty was nevertheless, long subsequent to Charles' days, held not merely in honour, but regarded with many superstitious feelings.

As well from the sanctity ascribed to his office, as from the reverence in which his descent was held, the Sovereign was deemed the possessor of powers all but supernatural; and it is not surprising that a reference to the belief in the supposed gift of healing by the mere touch of the Royal hand found its way into the greatest of Shakespeare's plays:

Mal. Comes the King forth, I pray you?
Doct. Ay, sir; there are a crew of wretched souls
 That stay his cure; . . . at his touch,
 Such sanctity hath heaven given in his hand,
 They presently amend.
Mac. What's the disease he means?
Mal. 'Tis called the Evil;
 . . . strangely visited people,
 All swol'n and pitiful to the eye,
 The mere despair of surgery, he cures:
 . . . and 'tis spoken
 'To the succeeding royalty he leaves
 The healing benediction.
 "Macbeth," Act iv., Scene 3.

It has, indeed, been asserted that this reference to a monarch's miraculous powers was designed to gratify the inordinate vanity of James the First; the fact, however, remains that a belief that scrofula could be healed by Royal touch existed from very early times both in this country and also in France. The English Kings were supposed to have inherited the power from the Confessor, and the French from St. Louis; and the supernatural virtue which our monarchs were said to possess, was ascribed in the days of Malmesbury, who lived about a hundred years later than St. Edward, to the hereditary right of the Royal line. No mention occurs of any of the first four English Kings of Norman race having attempted to cure the complaint; though Peter of Blois, who was his chaplain, bears testimony to the fact that Henry the Second both touched and healed those who were thus afflicted.

Sir John Fortescue, Chief Justice of the King's Bench in the time of Henry the Fourth, represents the power of healing as having been possessed by the Kings of England from time immemorial; but it was not until the reign of Henry the Seventh, who introduced the practice of presenting a small piece of gold to the sufferer, that a special Latin service was drawn up for the occasion. Nor has the exercise of this power been claimed for Kings alone; for, though it was at one time imagined that Queens, not being anointed in the hands, were incapable of exerting it, numerous cases of cure by Elizabeth are recorded, and the healing virtue was found in no degree impaired even subsequent to the

thunders of Papal excommunication. Her Majesty, however, is said to have been so tired of touching those who were desirous of being cured of the Evil, that, during one of her progresses in Gloucestershire, she warned the crowds who were pressing about her that God alone could relieve them of their complaints.

By proclamation, dated March the twenty-fifth, 1616, it appears that the King, through fear of contagion, would not permit patients to approach him during the summer months; and it was announced that no application would be received from anyone who did not bring a certificate, signed by the Vicar and Churchwardens of the parish, to the effect that he had never been previously touched. The necessity for this regulation arose, no doubt, from the greed of supposed patients who had attempted to receive the piece of gold on more than one occasion.

In the time of Charles the First the appointed service, though still printed upon a separate sheet, was drawn up in English, and, in the violent conflicts of parties during his reign, the reputed miracle assumed an additional importance. One cure, worked by this King, is especially famous: An innkeeper of Winchester, who was grievously ill and had sought help from many physicians, threw himself in the monarch's way as he was being conveyed through the city on his way to his place of confinement in the Isle of Wight. Being prevented by the guards from drawing near enough to the King to touch him, he fell on his knees beseeching help, and loudly crying, "God save the King."

"Friend," said Charles, "I see thou art not permitted to come near me, and I cannot tell what thou wouldest have; but may God bless thee and grant thy desire."

The Warden of Winchester College, Dr. Nicholas, assures us that this prayer was heard; that the sick man was healed of his disease; and that, within his own knowledge, these facts are essentially true.

Aubrey relates how, when Charles was a prisoner at Carisbrooke Castle, a woman, who had the King's Evil in her eye, and had not seen for a fortnight previous, was touched by him. "As they were at prayers," he adds, "after the touching, the woman's eyes opened."

Dr. Heylin asserts that he had seen children brought in the arms of their nurses before Charles the First, and that they were all cured "without the help of a serviceable imagination."

The King, at any rate, had not always gold to bestow; for which reason he sometimes substituted silver, and not unfrequently touched without giving alms at all.

Prior to the era of Charles the Second, no special coins appear to have been given at the ceremony; after this date, however, touch-pieces—bearing on the margin the words "He touched them," and on the reverse side "And they were healed," and displaying figures, commonly St. Michael and the Dragon on one side and a ship on the other—were coined.

These touch-pieces were at one time bored, so that they could be worn round the neck by a ribbon until the cure was completed; and thus in *The Rehearsal*, when Prince Prettyman talks of going to the wars, we find Tom Thimble observing: "I shall see you come home like an angel for the King's Evil, with a hole bored through you."

Charles the Second is said to have retained the power even in exile, and to have touched for scrofula in Holland, Flanders, and even in France. After the Restoration, the number of cases seems to have greatly increased, as many as six hundred at a time having been brought before the King; and one of the Royal surgeons, named Browne, whose duty it was to inspect the sick and verify the cures, assures us that in one single year Charles performed the ceremony eight thousand five hundred times, and in the course of his reign laid his hands upon no fewer than one hundred thousand persons. In the year 1687, on one single Sunday at Oxford, the King touched several hundred sick, and a petition is still preserved in the records of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, asking assistance from the assembly of the province to enable one of the inhabitants to proceed to England, to participate in the healing virtues of the miraculous gift.

The following announcement appears in the columns of the "Public Intelligencer," May the fourteenth, 1664. "His Sacred Majesty having declared it to be his royal will and purpose to continue the healing of his people for the Evil during the month of May, and then to give over till Michaelmas next, I am commanded to give notice thereof, that the people may not come up to town in the interim and lose their labour." The famous Admiralty secretary, Samuel Pepys, records in his "Diary," June, 1660, that "he staid to see the King

touch the people for King's Evil. But he did not come at all, it rayned so; and the poor people were forced to stand all the morning in the rain in the garden, and afterwards he touched them in the Banqueting-house." And again, thirteenth of April of the following year, he records that he went "to the Banquet-house, and there saw the King heale, the first time that ever I saw him do it; which he did with great gravity, and it seemed to me an ugly office and a simple one."

In the "London Gazette," January, 1683-4, is advertised "A Treatise on King's Evil, with a description of the Royal gift of healing it by imposition of hands, as performed for above six hundred and forty years by the Kings of England," by one of H.M.'s Surgeons-in-Ordinary, to which volume was prefixed a picturesque view of the Sovereign performing the ceremony; from this publication it appears that between May, 1660, and April, 1682, no fewer than ninety-two thousand persons had been touched by the King.

Evelyn in his "Diary," 6th July, 1660, says: "His Majesty began first to touch for the Evil according to custom, thus: His Majesty sitting under his State in the Banqueting-house, the chirurgeons cause the sick to be brought or led up to the throne, where, they kneeling, the King strokes their faces or cheeks with both hands at once, at which instant a chaplaine in his formalities says: 'He put his hands upon them and he healed them.' This is sayd to everyone in particular. When they have been all touched, they come up again in the same order, and the other chaplaine kneeling, and having angel gold strung on white ribbon on his arms, delivers them, one by one, to His Majesty, who puts them about the necks of the touched as they passe, while the first chaplaine repeats, 'That is the true Light who came into the world.'" Then follows an Epistle—as at first a Gospel—with the Liturgy; prayers for the sick with some alterations; and, lastly, the blessing; and the Lord Chamberlain and Comptroller of the Household bring a basin, ewer, and towel, for His Majesty to wash." And under date 28th March, 1684, he informs us "that there were so great a concourse of people with their children to be touch'd for the Evil, that six or seven were crush'd to death by pressing at the Chirurgeon's door for tickets."

The French monarchs employed a less presumptuous form of words, and when

laying hands upon the sufferer, said merely, "Le roi te touche; Dieu te guérisset." Cavendish, in his "Life of Wolsey," describes Francis the First as rubbing with his bare hands and blessing about two hundred persons diseased with the King's Evil, to whom money was afterwards distributed by the Almoner; "after which done, the King washed his hands and came to dinner, when my Lord Cardinal dined with him." Gemelli states that on the Easter Day, 1686, Louis the Fourteenth touched one thousand six hundred persons, every Frenchman receiving fifteen sous, and every foreigner thirty; and Louis the Sixteenth, immediately after his coronation at Rheims, 1775, went to the Abbey of St. Remi and made the sign of the Cross upon the faces of two thousand four hundred people who suffered under this affliction.

The "London Gazette," October, 1686, announces that His Majesty is graciously pleased to heal weekly for the Evil, upon Fridays, and the physicians and surgeons were to attend at an office appointed for the purpose in the Mews on Thursday afternoons to give tickets; of which parish ministers were required to give notice, and to be careful to register certificates granted by them in a book to be kept for the purpose. In Bishop Cartwright's "Diary," under date August 27th, 1687, we read:

"I was at His Majesty's levee; from whence, at nine o'clock, I attended him into the closet, where he healed three hundred and fifty persons."

It was one of the proofs against the Duke of Monmouth, that he had touched for the Evil when in the West.

The exercise of these thaumaturgic gifts, however, was suspended by the Revolution, for Dutch William was not generally believed to possess the power of healing. "William," says Macaulay, "had too much sense to be duped, and too much honesty to bear a part in what he knew to be an imposture." "It is a silly superstition," he exclaimed, when he heard that at the close of Lent, his Palace was besieged by a crowd of sick. "Give the poor creatures some money and send them away." On one single occasion was he importuned into laying his hand upon a patient, "God give you better health," he said, "and more sense."

The revival of the belief in these supernatural powers when the old dynasty was once more seated upon the throne, is one of the most curious features of ecclesiastical enthusiasm in the reign of Queen Anne.

Under a Stuart Queen, the Royal miracle was resuscitated, and the religious service, heretofore separate, was now inserted in the "Book of Common Prayer;" nor was it until some time after the accession of George the First, that the University of Oxford ceased to reprint the "Office of the Healing," together with the Liturgy. Proclamations appointed to be read in all parish churches were issued, announcing that the Queen would exercise the power as of yore, and the Sergeant-Surgeon to Her Majesty, who examined [the patients, has asserted in strong terms his belief in the reality of many of the cures. Swift, in his *Journal to Stella*, mentions—28th April, 1711—having made application through the Duchess of Ormond in behalf of a sick boy, and on a single day in the year following, two hundred persons appeared before Her Majesty, among them, no less a personage than Samuel Johnson, whose mother, acting under the advice of Sir John Floyer, then a physician at Lichfield, carried him to London, where he was actually touched by the Queen. Mrs. Piozzi describes his recollections of this scene: "He possessed," he said, "a confused, though somewhat solemn remembrance of a lady in diamonds, wearing a long black hood." He was but two-and-a-half years old at the time; and Boswell, alluding to the well-known Jacobite principles of the Lexicographer, ventured one day, to remark to him that "his mother did not carry him far enough; she brought him from Lichfield to London, but she should have taken him to Rome," i.e. to the Pretender. The touch-piece given by Queen Anne to Dr. Johnson is still preserved in the British Museum.

It appears to have been to the rite of unction, used in the coronation of our Kings, that this gift of healing was very generally ascribed. But Carte, whom Warton called "the historian for facts," declares that he himself had seen a very remarkable instance of such a cure, which cannot possibly be ascribed to such cause, in the case of a native of Somersetshire, who, a sufferer for many years from King's Evil, was taken in 1716 to Paris, touched, and as he would have us believe, in consequence healed, by the eldest lineal descendant of a race of Kings "who had indeed, for a long succession of ages, cured that distemper by the Royal touch, but who had not been either crowned or anointed." These remarks, implying that the extraordinary gift was confined to the Stuart dynasty and denied to the monarchy

of the house of Hanover, had an injurious effect upon the historian; the Corporation of London withdrew their subscription and patronage, his credit was destroyed, and his work, in consequence, was left incomplete.

Mr. Barrington has preserved an anecdote which he had heard from an old man (who was a witness in a case), with reference to the supposed miraculous power of healing, and which seems to throw light upon the whole subject. The old man "had, by his evidence, fixed the time of an occurrence by the Queen's having been at Oxford, and touched him for the Evil, when a child." After he had finished his statement, Mr. Barrington says that he had an opportunity of enquiring from him whether he was really cured. Upon which he answered, with a significant smile, that he never believed himself to have had a complaint that deserved to be called the Evil; but that his parents, being poor, had no objection to the piece of gold.

ELIZA.

A STORY IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER III.

AND now, after eighteen years, she was going to dine with Lionel Amherst. She sat alone for an hour after Clara had left her, looking out with wide-open, steadfast grey eyes into the hot and dusty street.

It was the dead season in London; everyone of consequence was out of town, and therefore Aunt Eliza had received her annual invitation to come up and do her shopping.

And at that very moment the blue waves were breaking with a long sweep on the tawny sand at Stillwater; against the pale azure of the sky gulls were circling like moving specks of silver, and breezes that carried on their wings faint saline odours from the sea, were whispering round the walls of her pretty sitting-room, and touching with fairy fingers the many tasteful trifles suspended there.

At that moment home seemed to her very dear and desirable, and yet she was resignedly stifling in town because her relatives wished to be kind while they were ashamed of her. Well, perhaps it was her own fault; she teased them, and therefore they protected themselves in the best way they could.

But Aunt Eliza laughed secretly at the

thought that she was supposed to delight in the small economy of making her purchases in the off-season. Aunt Eliza did not need to purchase left-over garments, or out-of-season fabrics; indeed, there was nothing in the way of rational expenditure that was beyond the means of this prosperous woman. It was really inconvenient to her to come to town now that her busy season had begun; but experience had taught her that it is well sometimes to yield to the wishes of others, even if their motives are not of the most exalted character. Her visit would end in a few days, and then she would go home, taking Mrs. Danver and her daughters with her for the whole golden month of September—if their engagements with Mr. Amherst permitted.

And then that previous feeling of the oddness of circumstances came back to her again, and this time it was tinged with the queerest undercurrent of pain.

Lionel Amherst had been little more than a dream-figure to her for years and years, but then he was part of the one golden dream of her life.

To a woman like Eliza Danver, love is all-satisfying, or it does not exist for her. To love and make allowances would have been impossible to her. In her case love was verily blind, and the blow which taught her to see clearly killed her heart, or at least she thought so.

In after years she was able to think that the loss of her fortune, since Lionel Amherst had failed her, was not a blessing in disguise, but a blessing with its name written on its forehead. Still this had not hindered her speculating a good deal at the first as to the after consequences, had Oakdene still been hers.

If money was so important, if to own or lose it placed a life in sunshine or in shadow, then she would be rich. So she resolved at the first, and the realisation of her ambition, as so often happens, killed the pain that had first stung ambition into life.

And now, after all these years, she was to meet her boy-lover again. Curious that she could think of him only as a boy, when she had grown so mature, and serene, and satisfied.

But he was a man now, middle-aged even, and he was going to marry Jessie, her niece.

Jessie was older now than she had been in that golden summer time when he had loved her. Half-a-dozen scenes from that old romance rose dreamily before her, and

somehow she found she was blushing as she looked on them. Then she laughed audibly, struck by a whimsical sense of contrast. He loved Jessie now, and Jessie very much wished her not to speak to him of the hotel!

Well, she would not; it would be hard if his affections should be disturbed again by the incidents of her history. And that made her remember that, in this instance, at least, his affection was disinterested. But he was rich now, Clara had said so, and of course that permitted a difference in his course of action. Perhaps if he had had possessions of his own long ago, he would not have fled from her when disaster overtook her.

This thought drew a faint sigh from her, and, in a softened mood, she went downstairs, and soon became quite herself again over preparations for the evening. She had a talent for culinary work, and liked nothing better than to wear a big apron and concoct little dishes, or polish the table appliances.

"We must have everything plain and good," she said to the cook, with her pleasant smile. "Ambition on occasions like this is ruinous, and besides gentlemen are not so very fond of kick-haws, so 'good and plain' must be our motto. One of the young ladies will go out and buy some flowers. I shall set the table in the dining-room, and among us we shall have splendid results."

While the bill of fare was under consideration Jessie came down to prepare afternoon tea, and the aunt and niece grew quite interested over plans for the evening, while they discussed their tea and toast; but neither of them referred to Mr. Amherst in any way, unless their preparations were a continuous reference.

Aunt Eliza was rather tired when she went up to her own room, and she sat down to read in the easy-chair by the window, and then Clara brought her a little bouquet of crimson carnations which Jessie had sent.

Clara was already dressed, and was amazed that Aunt Eliza had not even begun her toilet. Clara looked very girlish and pretty in a frock of white nun's veiling, with forget-me-nots as blue as her eyes among the lace on her breast.

"It is nice to be young," Aunt Eliza said, and sighed again; for the first time for years, a vague feeling of discontent was stirring at her heart.

Yet, regarded simply as a human

creature, she was more attractive than either of her nieces, and perhaps some thought of that kind came to her as she brushed out her thick dark hair, and twisted it into the coil that she wore low on her neck, regardless of the dictates of fashion.

Certainly her cheek and throat were less round than they had been, and her lips were not such a brilliant crimson, but what the face had lost in contour or colouring it had more than gained in character. Her eyes were full of a serene light, and the firm mouth, in recent prosperous years, had gained a touch of sweetness.

She wore the velvet dress that Clara had specified, and a fichu of coffee-coloured lace that enhanced the whiteness of her throat, and as she fixed Jessie's crimson flowers with the diamond crescent that held the lace together, she looked at her reflection in the mirror with a distinctly pleasurable sensation.

The guests had already arrived, when she reached the drawing-room; the Curate had been asked also informally, and had been pleased to come.

Mr. Amherst was talking to Jessie, and his back was turned towards the door, when Miss Danver entered, so the Curate and she were introduced, and had uttered a few commonplaces to each other before the guest-in-chief turned round.

When he did so he saw a woman who looked like a Queen, smiling down kindly on her companion.

She was standing in the shadow of the window-curtain, and the light from the western sky caught the graceful outlines of her figure, and brought into prominence the rich fabric of her dress and the diamonds sparkling at her ears.

Mr. Amherst seemed to feel his heart stand still, then it gave a great bound, so that it was very creditable to his self-control that he was able to ask, in his usual voice, "Who is that lady?"

"It is Aunt Eliza: she has come up to town for a few days, and will be with us till Friday."

"Will you introduce me to her?"

So he was introduced, but had only time to bow before the waiter announced dinner, and then he gave his arm to Mrs. Danver, and Mr. Symonds gave his to Aunt Eliza, and the girls brought up the rear.

Jessie sat on Mr. Amherst's left, and Mr. Symonds sat between Clara and Aunt Eliza. The dinner was excellent of its kind, and the table looked very pretty; but something seemed wrong.

Mr. Amherst talked little, and what he said was not possessed of any remarkable interest; Aunt Eliza scarcely spoke at all; and only that Mr. Symonds had a hobby about the better housing of the poor, and talked of it unweariedly, the whole company would have been absolutely silent at times.

When the ladies were back in the drawing-room, Clara expressed her surprise that anyone had ever said Mr. Amherst was clever, and unhesitatingly declared him ten times more stupid than Mr. Symonds. Mrs. Danver sighed, and said nothing. Having come to the conclusion that his attentions to Jessie had been without signification, she had no further personal interest in him. The poor lady was not very clever, but it does not require brilliant genius to arrive at the conclusion, that a man in love does not allow the object of his affections to talk to him for five minutes without understanding a single word she says.

Jessie flung herself on the sofa with a yawn. She had been a goose to imagine Mr. Amherst meant anything; but, Heaven be praised! she had never let anyone suspect she thought it.

Aunt Eliza said nothing, only fanned herself, though the room had grown cool enough.

By-and-by Clara went to the piano and began to play a "piece," and, when she would have desisted on the appearance of the gentlemen, Mr. Amherst said, "please go on," in a tone that sounded somewhat like a command. Then he came over and seated himself beside Aunt Eliza.

"I have been seeking you for five years," he said in a low voice, under cover of the music.

"Indeed!"

She turned her head slowly and looked at him with her clear, keen gaze.

"I was even foolish enough to advertise for you, thinking to reach you that way."

"I scarcely ever read the papers. I have not time."

"Where are you living?"

"At Stillwater. I own the Eagle Hotel there."

At the last words her voice had unconsciously taken a clearer intonation, and so Jessie heard them. The girl rose and moved away, and there was wrath in her heart. Aunt Eliza was horrible; when she knew how they hated the hotel, and when they had begged her not to mention it! It was not because of Mr. Amherst she was

angry; he did not matter now; her indignation was against the needless unkindness of her relative.

And yet Mr. Amherst had not in the least understood what he had been told. It was Miss Danver herself who interested him, not her circumstances.

"I hope you are as little changed in heart as in face," he said.

"What do you mean?"

"I hope you have never forgotten."

"Oh no, I never forgot."

"Nor I either. No woman has ever ousted you from my heart even for an hour."

She did not know what to say. She was bewildered, and amused, and pleased, and saddened all at once. That this great, bearded man, with threads of silver among the brown hair at his temples should take her by storm like this was the oddest sensation. And yet it was this very impetuosity, more than anything else, that identified the man before her with the boy-lover of her girlhood.

"I have wondered often and often," he said, taking up her fan and unfurling it slowly as he talked, "if you understood my going off as I did?"

"No, I did not understand it."

"You don't know what I felt like, when, for the first time I realised my position and yours. Do you know it was not until you lost your money, and existing things between us became impossible of continuance, that I understood what an unmanly thing it is for a man, without career or fortune, to woo an heiress; or what a base thing it is for a man to be helpless and dependent? That you had lost your home, and that I, your accepted husband, had none to offer you, smote me with conscious degradation. It was something more than despair I felt, it was dishonour. Then I wondered if you saw me with eyes similar to those with which I looked on myself, and I fled before your imagined scorn. It all comes back to me as vividly as though it were happening now," he said, passing his hand quickly across his forehead, "and I feel the same sensation of being crushed."

"Strange!" she said, dreamily. "To me it is all as far away as if it were the story of another's life."

"Then you must have cared far less than I did. You have been present with me every hour since we parted; you have saved me from a hundred temptations, and guided me to a score of honourable triumphs. Once, when I had been in New

York about a year, I had a chance of making a fortune in one of the dishonest ways that the world calls honest enough; but I put it away from me for your sake, and laid fifteen years of further waiting on my shoulders. You remember Jacob, and what a model of constancy he was? Well, I have distanced Jacob. Shall I have Jacob's reward?"

She turned her face away and did not answer, for she was blushing.

She hardly understood herself or her mood. After eighteen years love had come back to her like this, and she was not dismayed nor angry; bewildered rather, in a pleasurable way. That her practical, busy, successful life, the life that had engrossed her for years, should be calmly set aside as of no moment, and that she should again be regarded as a girl to be sought and won, was startling.

And she had been so angry with him, so scornful of him, so sure that he could never explain himself into her good graces again; and lo! he had never tried to explain; had shown no conscious sense of guilt; had simply said, "I went away because I could not claim you, and now that I can claim you I am here."

At this juncture Clara left the piano, and the conversation became general, when the coffee was brought in, and by-and-by the gentlemen said good-night and went away.

"I shall call to-morrow," Mr. Amherst said, addressing himself to no one in particular, and then he shook hands with them all and went out, but when he had parted from Mr. Symonds at the street corner, he retraced his steps, and told the waiter, who opened the door to him, that he had a word to say to Miss Danver, and the waiter of course misunderstood, and sent Jessie, and poor Lionel had no excuse whatever to offer her for his return, and went away crestfallen.

That set them all laughing a little, till Clara turned vivacious and said: "Aunt Eliza, you eclipsed every one this evening. Mr. Amherst had eyes for no one but you." Then Aunt Eliza, remembering that, in family difficulties, honesty is the best policy, said, after a little pause, "Mr. Amherst and I were engaged to be married eighteen years ago."

"Then of course it was you he came back to speak to to-night," Jessie said, and laughed in quite a heart-whole way. But she had received a shock, nevertheless; and when Aunt Eliza had gone to her

own room she seized on Clara, and said with a little fierceness: "You did not talk any nonsense to her about that man and any of us?" And Clara trembled and said "No."

"It is all as clear as daylight now," the elder girl continued; "he wanted to know us that he might find out about her."

And Clara added after a pause, "We shall miss our summers at Stillwater dreadfully."

"It is not so certain that she will marry him," Jessie said, with a reflective head-shake. "If I were in her place, and did not mind the hotel, I would not marry even a royal personage. When a woman is rich and independent, what in the world can she want with any man?"

"She will marry him, you will see," Clara felt no interest in abstract discussion.

And Clara was right, for when Mr. Amherst came next day, and Aunt Eliza, by command of her nieces, went down to receive him, he simply took her in his arms and kissed her, and after that there did not seem so very much more to be said.

Seeing how proud she had been of her independence, it seemed the oddest thing possible to Aunt Eliza afterwards, that when he said, "We shall be married in October," she had never uttered a protest.

"And to think that Mr. Amherst does not mind a bit about the hotel," Clara cried, when discussing the renewed engagement with her mother and sister, "and his family as old as the Conquest."

"Perhaps that is the very reason why he does not mind it, on the principle that extremes meet."

But people may philosophise on a subject without altogether loving it. Even when Jessie was a married woman she never heard Aunt Eliza mention Stillwater without a shudder. And certainly Aunt Eliza is a provoking woman in this particular, that she never can receive a compliment on her domestic management or her charming dinner parties without perversely explaining the source of her experience.

"I wonder is she a lady in her heart really!" Clara asked once, with a petulant stamp of her pretty foot.

"Her husband and other very nice people seem to think so," Jessie answered, with a little shrug of the shoulders. "And though I won't deny my own personal prejudices, the reasoning part of my intelligence recognises how strong, and sensible, and superior to the whole of us she has always been."

ALONG THE ADRIATIC.

PART I. BRINDISI.

WE landed at Brindisi in no very excellent humour. Instead of coming direct from Corinth in the well-appointed steamer of the Austrian Lloyds, we were bidden to shift our quarters in Corfu harbour, changing into a cramped dirty Italian vessel, resplendent with fly-blown gilding and mirrors. The rumour of cholera in Southern Italy had put the steamship companies into difficulty; as it was manifestly ridiculous that a boat plying between Corinth and Brindisi once a week, should have to undergo a ten days' quarantine every time it entered Brindisi. Hence the transfer at Corfu.

Again, our company on the Italian boat was not of the nicest, and as the deck room was limited, we had almost to sit on each other's knees.

And as if this were not sufficient punishment for our sins, we had been made to suffer a bad night in the Adriatic. The ship harboured insects; she also rolled. The wind veered to the south and, gave us a hot muggy atmosphere; and by the time we got to the landing stage of Brindisi, this had culminated in a dismal drizzle.

"I must inform you that twelve people died of cholera in Brindisi yesterday, and that there were any number of fresh cases which may or may not end fatally. Moreover, I am very sorry to say you have missed the train for the north. It left half an hour ago. You will therefore have to sleep in Brindisi."

A knot of us passengers standing on the greasy deck in the mist were thus addressed by an amiable gentleman, who seemed to have come on board simply and solely to depress our spirits. It was, perhaps, well for him that he went elsewhere as soon as he had finished his say. To complete my despair, the Customs' officers espied a cigarette in one of my pockets, and insisted on seeing the contents of the other six pockets I bore about me. The result of this was a duty upon the tobacco equal to about two-thirds of the worth of the tobacco in Greece. The cigarettes were for private smoking, but the Customs' officers cared nothing for that.

Brindisi is a city of some seventeen thousand inhabitants, picturesque to a Northerner because of its semi-tropical aspect, but otherwise a noisome hole to be

avoided. It has a prodigiously long history, which may be to its credit or discredit. Virgil, as all the world knows, died here. If he were at all disposed to die, previous to reaching Brindisi on his way to Rome, this would be the very place to carry him off. Even now its flat alluvial environs reek with malaria, but before the nineteenth-century engineers inaugurated the large draining processes which keep its harbour from stagnating, it must have been a perfect plague-pit. Had Horace continued the Satire descriptive of his and Mæcenas's journey from Rome to Brindisi, the epilogue might have told us that he was laid by the heels in the Brindisium, which was "*longæ finis viæ*." But the assumption is fair that, since he does but name the place, whereas elsewhere on the journey he finds words of praise or dispraise to bestow, Brindisi in his time was remarkable for nothing except being the terminus of the Appian Way.

We walked through and round about the city, and found much to amuse us. Many of the old Venetian buildings survive, though their exceedingly ornate porticoes are in no harmony with the undignified mortals who swarm by scores on the different flats of the lodging-houses, to which these fine houses are degraded. The streets are narrow, and the buildings so tall that the sun can have little to do with the thoroughfares. But as if the urban architecture were not arranged to secure sufficient coolness for the townspeople, these love best, it seems, to live in low dark basements or cellar rooms, that look as if they were cut out of a rock. Whole families herd in a single room. The two or three great beds that stand at angles to each other, will each hold four or five individuals. Some we see already occupied in the afternoon. But ordinarily the inhabitants of the house are sprawling about the threshold, or turning the spinning-wheel, or kneading dough, or making boots. One feature is never wanting in these habitable caves—a gaudy little shrine in one of the corners facing the door, with a swing lamp hanging before a picture or model of the Virgin.

The colours of Brindisi, like its latitude, are semi-tropical. Even on this dull day, we could enjoy the olives, and pinks, and light greens and greys of the houses. At a distance they are white; but close at hand the illusion goes. Then the dress of the people is as vivid as the tone of their lustrous skin or their fine black eyes. The

men, for the most part, go about in blue blouses, with little or nothing underneath; but the women coruscate with necklets of metal and glass, and are as gay as rain-bows besides, in parti-coloured cotton and wool. The lasses loved being sketched, moreover. They stuck their plump arms akimbo, set themselves well on their legs, and stood like things of brass as long as they were asked to stand. It was pretty, again, to see them in the market-place, sitting in the midst of great heaps of vivid oranges. But as hucksters they are a little importunate, and it is not every man that would feel at ease with the arms of a siren beautiful as Cleopatra tight round his neck, beseeching him to buy. Again, not every one can admire the association of tobacco and beauty: and yet some of these pretty girls sat demure with pipes in their mouths.

There was bustle or prattle enough wherever we walked the streets, amidst foul smells and litter of garbage; and to the bulk of Brindisi's seventeen thousand people it seemed nothing at all that they had the cholera devouring in their midst, striking down a man every hour of the twenty-four.

By alleys and roads like ditches, we found our way beyond the boundaries of brick and stone. We were in the midst of little vineyards, just sprouting into leaf, of almond-trees in full fruit, fig-trees thick with the first crop of futile figs, pear and apricot trees sweet with blossom. The thoroughfares were marked by hedges of great cactus, or soaring masses of prickly pear, lifting their doll-like heads one over the other. Here and there were groups of rugged old olives, looking like things petrified in the midst of a death agony; a few orange trees perfuming the warm, drowsy air; some cypress points; and a bare half-dozen of real palm trees, strong and healthy as if they were on African soil. But the most notable thing of all outside the town is the decaying wall, which once girt the town, with its dilapidated towers and crumbling heaps. Dogs, clay-coloured like the wall and towers, lay in the holes which honeycombed this ancient cincture, and countrymen from the market, returning home, drove their mules with a jingle of bells through this or that breach which time and persistent feet had made in this once-strong fortification. These walls may have seen the Crusaders, very many of whom found Brindisi a convenient place to die in; but I suppose they can

hardly go back to Cæsar and Pompey, who, once upon a time, fought, or rather struggled, face to face in Brindisi. Viewing the town and harbour and grey-green surroundings from this vantage-point, one is forced to a conclusion that, however comfortable to an Englishman, is somewhat sad to the cosmopolitan with a little sentiment left in him. It is this: that the few graces of antiquity which redeem Brindisi from the category of ugly places are doomed soon to go. The P. and O. steamers are excellent nutriment for the town. House property is so much in request that it appears quite desirable to steal stones from the city walls, and build them into houses whenever the whim takes a man. We saw numbers of such buildings fed on such unholy quarry; so that soon the walls will disappear, or be applied as substantial foundation for a crescent of houses to be called Via East India or Via Jolly Tars, according to the degree of culture or wealth of the speculator. In the town one sees several little canteens which, below the ordinary Italian announcement of "Vino, etc.," have scratched on their sign-board the seductive monosyllable "Grog!" And I may further say that, in one of Brindisi's streets, we were hailed tempestuously by a knot of unpleasant native ladies with a volley of unvarnished British seamen's oaths. These women did not mean to be rude, I think, but they left upon us a bad impression.

Of course, Brindisi has its patron saint, who in extreme cases will work a miracle. But there is really much to be said in praise of the Saint Lorenzo da Brindisi, who, next to the Virgin, is most frequently on the lips of a good Catholic of the town. He is not like Saint Nicholas of Bari—a large town a few hours' ride from Brindisi—who, although he has been dead almost a millennium, keeps his bones ever moist and ready to do good deeds at the request of the guardian dignitaries. This Saint Nicholas is, indeed, one of the oddest of the many odd saints held in reverence by the Italians. A friend of mine visited the town simply and solely to obtain the wonder-working fluid which trickles periodically from his bones. It is called the manna of Saint Nicholas; but, whatever it may be made of, I doubt whether it is consumed like the manna of Palestine. My friend returned to Brindisi with a small phial of this exudation of Saint Nicholas. He paid twopence for it, and if it had but one of

the many fine properties that are ascribed to it, the purchase was cheap enough.

But to return to Saint Lorenzo of Brindisi, who, from his birth to his death, was so remarkably in contrast with the men of the present day, that I shall not scruple to give a few particulars about him. He was born at Brindisi in 1559, of rather common parents. His father found him so attractive a baby, that for long he was uncertain whether he was a heavenly or a terrestrial being. As soon as he could crawl, his unusual excellences were made apparent. He declined to play with other little children, and struck every one dumb with admiration by the mild modesty of his deportment. At four, young Lorenzo said, he would like to be a monk when he became a man. At seven, he was allowed to enter the pulpit of the Cathedral of Brindisi, whence he preached sermons that made profound sensation among their hearers. And, by this time, he had so completely severed himself from the trivial lot of ordinary men, that on the death of his father he showed a resignation and indifference that were as astounding as any previous incident in his young career.

His mother now took the austere little Lorenzo from Brindisi to Venice, where was a religious uncle, who received him with enthusiasm. Lorenzo found here a little cousin after his own heart. The two boys, not yet in their teens, were wont to spend all the time, not exacted by their schoolmasters, in religious disputations. One day, they were returning from church in a crowded gondola, when a storm arose. The boat was instantly in dire peril; but Lorenzo was in it, and when the boy stood up and made the sign of the Cross, the winds were appeased, and the waves fell flat. Shortly after this, the lads were admitted to the Order of the Capuchins as postulants. Already, Lorenzo had fitted himself for his life of self-denial by wearing a hair shirt of a peculiarly irritating kind, by night as well as by day, and by fasting three days in the week. And his conduct and austerities were such, that at the early age of sixteen he was finally promoted into that Order as Fra Lorenzo da Brindisi.

Now it was that the lad began to suffer for the unnatural restraints he had put upon his unfortunate body. He was threatened with consumption; but, having conquered this enemy, he was sent away to Sicily, where he soon made his mark as a man who could, after a single hearing, repeat this or that sermon word

for word. He also took up linguistic studies, and was speedily at home in Spanish, French, Bohemian, German, Greek, Chaldean, Syriac, and Hebrew. The rabbis, with whom he was sent to argue on sacred subjects, would not believe that he was not a Hebrew; and so of the Spaniards, French, Germans, etc. The modesty which had characterised Lorenzo as a baby clung to him as a monk. His good qualities were apparent to every one but himself. His superiors, in nominating him for this or that responsible mission in Italy, or Germany, or Spain, always had to enforce their nominations with commands; and it was thus at their bidding only that he consented to go before the Popes of Rome; to visit Vienna and the Archduke Matthias, for negotiatory purposes; and make the acquaintance of the mighty Emperor of Spain and the Netherlands. But, wherever Lorenzo went, he won reverent goodwill and friends.

At one time he was leading Christian armies against countless hordes of Moslems (myriads of bullets raining about him and the crucifix that he carried) and always with success; at another he was being honoured with successive private interviews by Philip the Third of Spain, who treated him with the regard of a brother. Of the many miracles which marked his course in life, perhaps the most noteworthy is that whereby one day he was held suspended between earth and heaven for several hours. But after his death (in Lisbon, whither he had gone in pursuit of the King of Spain) certain wonders occurred which may be said to eclipse even this. At the moment of dying he was a lean man, worn and emaciated by self-imposed penance; but shortly afterwards his body, in the words of the chronicler, was found to be "*bellissimo, vermiglio, e fresco come un immacolato fiore*" (ruddy, well-favoured, and sweet as a spotless flower).

Again, about two days after his death, it was proposed to open the body of Lorenzo. Certain of the doctors objected: it was the time of summer; it was late even to bury him, much more to make a post-mortem examination of him. However, the King insisted, and then, marvellous to say, Lorenzo's corpse began to emit so sweet a savour that all who attended the operation were ravished by the perfume. Never, they said, had they enjoyed so celestial an experience. Then Lorenzo was buried with great honour. In 1783 he was canonised, after the examina-

tion of the proofs of two well-authenticated miracles worked in his name. And so he does honour to Brindisi, and Brindisi does honour to his memory.

The untidy old sacristan, who showed us the Cathedral, made much of a heap of bones and iron rings that were kept in a cupboard of the north transept. They were of incredible sanctity, he said. I am sorry to say, however, that we were followed up the aisle of the church and to the very threshold of the cupboard by a brace of tall, thin dogs, who sniffed at the bones as if they, at least, had no ideal reverence for such relics. This cathedral has also a mosaicised pavement of a strange and very ancient type; an altar-piece three hundred years old, passable enough as a work of art; a gorgeous ceiling; and a door so quaintly and laboriously carved in panels that it is the object in Brindisi best worth seeing. But as a building it is so dirty that the very dogs, who were allowed to come in with us, looked where they set their feet, as they pattered daintily over its stones.

Before going for the night to the hotel, to which we had been inveigled in the wake of our baggage, we had two other objects of interest to see. The one is the ancient tower of a disused church, standing up in file with the paltry shops and dwelling-houses of the street in which it is situated. Our guide had so singular a grin on his sallow face, when he set us upon the staircase leading to the top of this tower, that I could not but suspect him of evil design or an evil conscience.

"Now then," said I, "what is this place, and what is there to see at the top when we get there? I don't go up till you tell me. That's a fact, per Bacco."

"Nothing, Signor, nothing at all," replied the man, with a flutter of gesticulations. "I do not ascend with you because of the leg—I am bad in the leg, and Mariucciana, the wife, would not wish me to exert myself."

"But if there is nothing to see, why should we take the trouble to climb it?"

"As you will, Signor."

But the man's shrug of the shoulder and resignation had so much of mystery about them, that we all stumbled up the steps without delay.

To be sure there was nothing to see, except an old clock face, the interior of a number of neighbouring back-yards, the masts of some ships, and the dusky water of the harbour. We were much disturbed

by the thought that we had been behaving like the most irresponsible of automatic tourists. But ere we had got half-way down the steps again, some one cried out that he had the cramp in his right knee. The next moment every man jack of us had the cramp also in the same place; and by the time we were at the bottom of the steps, with the grinning Italian puffing a cigarette in our faces, we were all bending and rubbing our knee-caps.

"It is always so, Signor," said the Italian, emitting a long, cool whiff of tobacco smoke. "It is certainly a strange thing, is it not?"

"And so you brought us here to give us the cramp, did you, and stayed down below to escape it yourself? That was certainly a very cowardly way to behave."

"But, Signor——" protested the man.

However, as by this time the cramp had left us as suddenly as it had come to us, we determined to say no more about it. None of the theories put before us in explanation of this disagreeable peculiarity of the old church tower seemed very satisfactory. If it was true that the ghost of a reverend Father lay in waiting at the fortieth stair to grip a leg of every passer-by, why did he not do it in the ascent as well as the descent? A rheumatic chill, indigenous on a particular square foot of the stone, would not have seized us with such extraordinary simultaneity. Nor did we think much of the Italian's last suggestion, that the architect and builder between them had bungled the building, and by setting two or three lumps of masonry awry in a very peculiar way, made it impossible to get over these without physical discomfiture. This only can be said: that just as we suffered in the old tower, so may you—and you may theorise as we theorised.

After the tower we climbed through sundry bad quarters of the town, where no doubt the cholera was very thick, to a stone terrace overlooking the important civic buildings which stand close to the harbour sea-board. Here was the famous decorated column supposed to mark the end of the Appian Way. It is a fine stone with a capital carved to represent the torsos of burly gods instead of acanthus leaves. Near it were sundry other fragments of columns, and inscribed stones. The residents round about had no very intense respect for these old relics. They had strung clothes-lines from one to the other of them, and while we examined

their writing and ornament, and conjectured about the marvellous sights they might have seen had they been endowed with eyes, ladies of stout build, with their gowns tucked up to their knees, passed to and fro with reeking linen and flannel unmentionables, which they hung out to dry. During the process of their labours these good souls made very uncomplimentary remarks about the looks and dress of the English; they also said very prettily the one to the other that England must be but a poor place if English people thought it worth their while to climb the "strada" to look at such lumps of stone as these, which were by no means the best things of their kind, even for a drying ground. And herein, perhaps, they were not far wrong. We were loudly jeered by the rascally children of these dames of Brindisi, when we began to return to the highway. It was already past sunset time, so we made our way to the hotel which had been chosen for us in despite of our wishes.

You see, landing at these Levantine ports is always so much of a scrimmage that unless you are monstrously wide-awake, you are fast in the hands of a strong factotum of this or that hotel before you know where you are. It was so here at Brindisi. In a moment of forgetfulness, I had lost sight of our baggage, and only chanced to see it when it was in full gallop along a street towards a hotel of which I knew nothing. This was annoying to begin with. But as a compromise it was settled that we should make the best of matters, and see to what sort of a place our baggage had led us.

Now in Brindisi there are but two hotels fit to lodge a British bull-dog; the one is the stately red building close to the landing stage, with a bit of a court-yard planted with tropical plants, and a full staff of officials, conveniences, and luxuries. Here they speak English and every other language, including, I believe, a little Hindustanee for the benefit of travelling East Indians, who leave the steamer and go overland to England with the mails. It is an imposing hotel, where they make a charge for a chair; but it is comfortable. The other hotel is not bad, viewed from the street. Indeed, its windows, some ten feet high, and its heavy balconies, appeal to the imagination; but it is very different to the other. It is kept by a Greek named Grapsa, who might, without injustice to himself, transpose the "p" and the "s" in his name, and who speaks no English. It

was to Grapsa's house that our baggage went tearing along, and eventually thither we went in the wake of it. Grapsa, the Greek—fat, sleek, yellow, small-eyed, and wearing a fez—received us with much rubbing of hands, and lively assurances that he felt the honour we had done in selecting his hotel.

I do not propose to go into the minute history of our experiences in Grapsa's hands. He gave us palatial bed-rooms, paved with red and white marble flags, and with bright blue wall papers. At our every movement he was afoot to see what we wanted, or his sad-looking son, a man of thirty, who had learnt just enough French to puzzle himself with. And the cook in Grapsa's hotel was by no means a fool. But there was an atmosphere of impending doom in the place that was not cheerful. In the "salon" I talked with two gentlemen, who constituted the number of other guests in the building. The one was a schoolmaster at Corfu, a leathery old gentleman with long yellow teeth, who corrected my pronunciation of Greek in a very magisterial manner; and the other was a vivacious young man from Amsterdam, resting there on his way to his parents in the same Island of Corfu. Both these gentlemen mentioned Grapsa's name with awe. The younger one whispered that he was even something of a prisoner. He had asked for his bill the other day, and it was so preposterous that he could not pay it. He had calculated his expenses from Amsterdam to Corfu to a nicety; he had his ticket for the steamer; and here he was, within twelve hours' steam of his parents' arms, practically held at ransom! Vain was it for him to promise that he would send the money to Grapsa from Corfu. Grapsa preferred that the poor young man should spend a week with him, which would be the amount of time before a letter could receive answer from Corfu, enclosing a remittance.

"And in the meantime," moaned the poor fellow, "I'm running up a new bill for this horrible week, also. The money will not suffice, and I shall be detained longer, and the leave of absence I hold from my employers in Amsterdam will soon have half expired, and I shall not be able to see my dear father and mother for another five years."

After that, we were much inclined as a body to turn the tables upon this Grapsa by some forcible measure. But, enough of him. He is a nauseous subject, in spite of

his good cooking. He gave us soft beds with plenty of fleas in them, and on the day of our departure, presented us with a bill a foot long, which I succeeded in getting acquitted at a composition of sixty per cent. As for our two unfortunate comrades, we gave them our best wishes, and expostulated with Grapsa on behalf of the younger of them to such good purpose, that the rascal promised to be lenient. But I fear that Grapsa was of the mind of Talleyrand, and made use of speech merely to conceal his wicked intentions.

UNCLE BOB'S NIECE.

By LESLIE KEITH.

Author of "*The Chilcoates*," etc.

CHAPTER IX.

ALL this time the friendship between Tilly and Miss Walton was progressing very comfortably.

Naturally, it made larger strides on Tilly's part, because friendship was a greater novelty in her life, and it had, therefore, more piquancy and relish. Miss Walton, who had the advantage of superior age and experience, was, one might almost say, blasé in this respect, and had less enthusiasm to spare than in the days when she corresponded with sixteen fellow school-girls and called each of them her dearest; but she was very much charmed with Tilly, and quite willing to meet her at least a quarter of the way in that oft-travelled ground.

Uncle Bob was an almost equally interesting study to this astute young person, though her opportunities of observation were few; for Uncle Bob, loud and unblushing as he was with men, was undeniably shy in the presence of ladies.

For a time after Miss Walton's conquest of Tilly, he was but little seen in the red velvet sitting-room, which was mainly given over to snips, shreds, patterns, bandboxes, and girls' chatter. It was that chatter that alarmed him, and sent him off precipitately to take refuge with his Behrens.

Miss Walton, who had lingered on in defiance of propriety and Mrs. Thompson, bent on cementing her friendship and securing it beyond hazard, was very glad to share the bright sitting-room. For herself, she could only afford a bed-room, and that a small and unluxurious one at the top of the house, where the chambermaid

is apt to stint her attentions and to be deaf to appeals for hot water.

Down in Tilly's vast first-floor room the machinery of service went much more smoothly; life was worth living there; and Tilly, happy Tilly! had everything she wanted, even to the society of Honoria, which she coveted more and more. But it was no part of Honoria's scheme to ignore or exclude Uncle Bob. Mr. Burton's character seemed to her to be one that would "repay perusal," as good-natured critics say of books. The time would not be wasted that was spent in studying him; she wished to know him, if it were only to contradict Maria, who was always breathing forth warnings and injunctions from the North. So one day, while she and Tilly sat together, she remarked:

"Your uncle very seldom pays you a visit now."

"He is afraid of you," said Tilly with a laugh. "You inspire him with awe! How nice it must be to inspire anybody with awe! That's a privilege you tall and majestic people keep all to yourselves. Nobody ever was afraid of a person of my inches."

"If that is the reason why he stays away, it need not exist any longer."

"I don't see it. You can't help being stately, and you certainly can't help being tall."

"But I can stay away."

"Well," said Tilly with a shake of her sunny head, "I think I'm being very badly used. First Uncle Bob deserts me, and now you propose to do the same. I will not be deserted. There!" she jumped up and skimmed across the room, "he is trying to do it again! I have caught you this time, Uncle Bob; you can't escape," she said, for Mr. Burton, who had put a cautious head in at the door, was gently struggling to free himself from the little hands that held him prisoner.

"There!" she said, leading in her captive, looking very sheepish and red in the face, "and now, sir, will you please tell me what it is you find so alarming in my friend? She is not so haughty as she looks, she will not snub you, I believe, if you address her very humbly and respectfully."

Honoria laughed and held out her hand.

"Mr. Burton would give me a better character than his niece," she said.

"Do you hear that, Uncle Bob? She is not afraid of you, you see; it is me she

is really afraid of, so you'd better stay and protect her."

"Stay on better grounds than that. Stay to give us pleasure," said Honoria frankly.

"You are very kind, mem," said Uncle Bob, recovering his manners and making his best bow; "I'm but a rough chap, but if you're willing to put up with me, I'm proud to stop a bit with you and my lass here."

"Then that's settled," said Tilly gaily, "and here is your very own chair, and now I feel safe again. Do you know, if you had gone away, Miss Walton would have gone too, and I should have been sacrificed to etiquette and abandoned to silence. Now, Uncle Bob, you may hold this skein, and while I wind it I am going to talk—we are going to talk—and you must please listen attentively, for it is a very important scheme indeed we are going to unfold."

"A scheme, eh? What's that?"

"A plan, a proposal, a suggestion," said Tilly airily; "a mere 'suppose.' You like 'supposes,' Uncle Bob. Do you remember what a heap of them we used up when we talked of coming to London?"

"Ay, and here we are in London, and there's a good deal of supposing to be done yet, it seems to me."

"That's just it. A good deal to be done yet. Well, Miss Walton and I have been doing some of it—to save time. We've supposed, for instance, that we none of us can live all the rest of our lives in an hotel. Even Mr. Paul Behrens, I should think, doesn't mean to do that——"

"That's just what he's been saying," struck in Mr. Burton. "He says it every day. 'Why don't you take a house?' he says. He's a knowing chap; he can help us, Tilly. He's a Londoner, or as good as a Londoner, you see. They're a sharp lot, these Cockneys. Meaning no offence to you, mem," he suddenly pulled himself up and looked confusedly at Miss Walton.

"Oh, I'm not a Londoner in that sense," she smiled. "I wasn't born within sound of Bow Bells."

"I shouldn't think Mr. Behrens was, either," remarked Tilly. "Well, never mind; we are all agreed as to his sharpness. And what does he want us to do, Uncle Bob?"

"Well, you see, this is how he puts it. 'What you want,' he says, 'is to get into society, into the best sort of society, where your niece would have the advantages

she deserves, and where she would shine.' These were his words, Tilly—he thinks a deal of you, my lass."

"Oh, he does, does he?" said Tilly lightly, "how very kind of him, to be sure!"

"There's sense in what he says," the narrator continued. "You can't expect folks to believe in you unless you give them some kind of a guarantee; it's not enough to say you're rich—you've got to prove it. You've got to push yourself to the front and assert yourself; you've got to cut a dash," the speaker warmed with his theme; "show them that you're not afraid of being somebody—fling your money about freely, and they'll believe you fast enough."

"It sounds an exceedingly unpleasant prescription," said Tilly, letting fall her work and going to perch herself on the arm of his chair, "and as difficult as it is unpleasant. How, for instance, does one 'cut a dash'?"

"You'll learn that soon enough!" he retorted, pinching her ear. "Difficult? There's nothing easier, with a pile like mine to dip into. You wait till Behrens gets me the horses he has an eye on—and the house. We'll send over to Paris for the furniture; I guess, when you're bowling along in your own carriage, the rest will come easy enough——"

"It seems to me," said the girl gravely, "that Mr. Behrens is to do everything. He is to choose the house and the horses—no doubt he will give me lessons, too, in 'cutting a dash'; I dare say he will even help us to 'fling the money about.'"

Honoraria, who had taken no part in the discussion, looked up rather sharply. Did this pretty, innocent-looking Tilly mean to be sarcastic? There were no signs of such intention in the look she bent on her uncle. It was a very affectionate look.

"I'm afraid I'm not equal to all that splendour yet, dear," she said. "I couldn't live up to it—just yet. I must be educated first; I am only a girl from the country——"

"You're good enough for me," he said with a dogged and mutinous air.

"Of course I'm good enough for you!" she retorted gaily. "I'm even good enough for Miss Walton—so she says," she cast a merry look at her friend, "but I'm not good enough yet for the honours Mr. Behrens would thrust upon me. I'm coming to them by-and-by; perhaps I have even ambitions for us beyond these,

but I want to get used to things a little first."

"Well, and how are you going to do that?" he asked, with a half distrustful look at Miss Walton, who appeared to him to have been sowing a great deal of revolutionary seed in Tilly's mind.

"That belongs to our 'suppose.' It is this——"

"Tilly," interrupted Honoraria, suddenly rising, "I am going to leave you to discuss matters with your uncle alone. It is no business of mine how you settle this affair. Oh, I know what you are going to say—the suggestion was mine. Well, so it was; but my absence makes it all the easier for you to reject it if you don't like it. You will, in any case, talk it over better without me," and, not waiting for any remonstrance, she left the room.

Tilly looked after her with a shadow of disappointment; her cause was the feebler without this ally. But Uncle Bob applauded the action.

"She's right, my lass," he said; "she's got no business, as she says, to meddle between you and me, though she is your friend."

There was a hint of jealousy in his tone.

"I think Mr. Paul Behrens meddles, though he is your friend," she retorted with a laugh.

"Well," said her uncle dispassionately, "there's no call to follow the one or the other of them unless we like. I guess we can choose for ourselves. Now, what in the name of creation is this fine plan of yours? Out with it, my lass; it's close upon one o'clock, and I'm as hungry as a hunter."

"It's only a 'suppose.' I want you to understand that to begin with. Suppose we go to a boarding-house? I have been studying the question of boarding-houses lately, and they seem to have been created on purpose for people like you and me."

"What's there different in you and me from other people," he demanded with a sort of grim good-humour, "except that I'm richer and you're prettier than most folks?"

"Let us put it that way," she assented gaily, her hand on his shoulder keeping time as it rose and fell to her words. "You're too pretty—no, you're too rich and I'm too pretty—for us to live in a big house all by ourselves, even with Mr. Paul Behrens for our guide, philosopher, and friend. When I've learnt to 'cut a dash' it will be different; but I think I'd like to

begin by shining in a boarding-house—a charming, select, refined boarding-house. I've been studying the advertisements in the 'Daily Telegraph,' you see, and I have the advantages off by heart. There don't seem to be any disadvantages. It's home and society nicely blended into one. If we're to make a circle—and that seems to be what is expected of us—a boarding-house is our chance."

"I suppose Miss Walton has put this notion into your head," said Uncle Bob, receiving the proposal with lukewarm hospitality and characteristic national distrust. Liliesmuir is innocent of a boarding-house, and if there are any in China, in Western America, and in the Australian Bush, they are probably not the places to which one would, of free choice, take a pretty young girl. Then the idea had not emanated from that oracle, Mr. Paul Behrens. Mr. Behrens's mind remained unplumbed on the subject, there was no calculating on his sentiments. He might approve, but he might condemn. As for Miss Walton, her approval went for very little; for though she was a lady, and as such an object of respect to one who had no traditions, she was but a young lass, and what could a young lass know?

"It's all very well for her to talk," he exclaimed, "but I'll warrant you she wouldn't be so keen to go to one herself."

"Well, yes," said Tilly gravely, "she is going to one, and that's why she wants us to go too."

If Mr. Burton had known a little more of the world—or rather of the modern attitude of young womanhood towards the world—he would not have been staggered by this reply. He had thought for a moment that Miss Walton, considering Tilly her social inferior, had offered a suggestion which she would not have desired to follow in her own person; but it appeared that he was doing the young woman an injury.

Miss Walton was not only going to a boarding-house; she had gone to many. She knew their tricks and manners off by heart. She had migrated in summer to the suburban mansion where the tennis-ball is sent briskly flying and croquet and flirtation still linger. With winter she had flitted back to the joys of communistic life in Bayswater and Kensington. If Uncle

Bob considered this a strong-minded proceeding on the part of a "real lady," it only shows how antique, how archaic, were his views.

Shrinking modesty and timidity have gone out of fashion; they are as out of date as the spleen and the vapours. No well-brought-up mother is ever astonished nowadays at any proposal her daughter may make, at any experience she may set herself to fathom. If Jessie were to announce her intention of living in chambers; if Emma packed her trunk and departed to make trial of lodgings, mamma would quite understand that remonstrance was useless, and, compared with these, existence in a boarding-house is a comparatively decorous, blameless, chaperoned affair. Miss Walton had no mamma to shock; and, since in these days, nobody is too young to do anything she likes, there was probably no reason to be shocked at all.

Having seen that her little arrow sped home, Tilly was merciful in her triumph.

"Talk it over with Mr. Behrens, dear," she said. "He is Sir Oracle to us. You will believe if he says it is all right? And, after all, it's only a 'suppose'; it need never get beyond that if you don't like it."

"Well, we'll see, we'll see," he got up heavily. "I won't just say that Behrens knows everything," he remarked as he was leaving her, "and I don't hold with folks that must always be running to others for advice. I've got a pair of eyes in my head, and I guess I can use them as well as most. If it's to be a boarding-house—and, mind you, I don't say it is—or if it's to be a house—and I don't say it's to be that neither—it will be Bob Burton that will have the last word to say in the matter, I can tell you!"

"As if he didn't always get his own way, poor Uncle Bob!" said Tilly, looking at him in her frank, audacious, laughing way.

There was no fear of these two misunderstanding each other; no dread of wills that should clash. Tilly told herself nightly in her prayers, which were as yet all thanksgivings, that she owed everything, everything—all the pleasures of her past, all the joys and coming triumphs of her future, to this kind uncle. Surely her faith, and her love, and her service, were a very little price to pay for these?